



**South Carolina**  
**Department of Commerce**  
*Site Certification Program*  
*Description, Instructions, & FAQ's*



**Last Updated February 2006**

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### **Appendix: Questionnaires Step I – Step IV**

# South Carolina Department of Commerce

## Site Certification Program Description, Instructions, and FAQ's

The Department of Commerce has a site certification program to accomplish the following:

- provide prospects with additional site data and assure that certain minimum information is available on a site;
- assist the communities in determining the marketability of existing sites; and
- provide a structured step-by-step process certifying sites.

A Certified Industrial Site is defined as a site of at least 20 acres that can support a minimum of 50,000 square feet of building space on a single level and meets the standards of the site certification program.

Below are instructions for the four steps of certification. While any step should enhance the marketability of the property, all four steps are **required** for Department of Commerce certification.

### Step I – Listing & Availability Confirmation

In order to begin the site certification process, a site must first be listed as available by the Department of Commerce.

Once a site has been verified as being available, the local development organization should have the following on file:

- price per acre for the site;
- zoning of the site and surrounding property;
- information on rights-of-way, encumbrances, liens, judgments, and/or restrictive covenants;
- appropriate fire rating of the site; and
- availability of additional mapping verified.

### Step II – Infrastructure Availability

During this step the local development organization must document the infrastructure and determine the excess water and wastewater capacities. If infrastructure is not in place, the county

must have a plan to extend water and wastewater service to the site as well as electric, natural gas and transportation service.

For sites not fully served by utilities, components include distance, cost, size of line, and estimated time to extend service to the site. Detailed engineering studies are not required in this step.

Generally, if the available infrastructure is less than one mile from the site, bringing infrastructure to the site would be a feasible option.

If the available infrastructure is between one and five miles from the site, bringing infrastructure to the site would be a feasible option, but more costly.

If the available infrastructure is more than five miles from the site, the process of extending infrastructure must be documented with associated cost estimates. This will help local development organizations know how this site can be prioritized in the service area.

### **Step III**

The most important activity in this step is determining the maximum contiguous usable acres. This step also requires the following:

- a preliminary wetlands study (delineation of the wetlands is not required);
- a Phase I Environmental Study; and
- an endangered species/archeological investigation.

### **Step IV**

In this step, communities will be asked to provide the following:

- a geotechnical study;
- a color aerial photo of the site;
- a purchase option; and
- an International Building Code seismic classification of the specific site.

A copy of the deed should be obtained and a boundary survey should also be completed in this step.

If wetlands delineation exists, please provide this information, as it will be an added benefit to the certification of the site.

## **Summary**

Local development organizations would be self-reporting. It is suggested that an engineering organization or civil engineer be retained to compile the necessary information, correctly fill out the appropriate forms, and submit it to the Department of Commerce. Upon submission, it will be reviewed by the Department of Commerce for certification. Written notification will be forwarded to the county economic development organization.

## **[Site Certification Questionnaires](#)**

### **Where to Send Certification Questionnaires**

All questionnaires can be sent to:

S.C. Department of Commerce  
Certified Site Program  
1201 Main Street, Suite 1600  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Fax number - (803) 737-0538  
Phone - (803) 737-0400

## Instructions for Completing Step I

1. Verification of an industrial site – A site is considered “verified” when a Department of Commerce Site Questionnaire is completely filled out, signed by the owner of the site, and submitted and signed by the director of the economic development authority for the respective county.

If a site is not verified, a site questionnaire can be obtained from a Community Development Manager with the Division of Community and Rural Development at the Department of Commerce. The questionnaire should be completed in full, signed by the appropriate individuals and submitted as stated above. The site is considered “verified” when posted on the Department of Commerce web site ([www.sccommerce.com](http://www.sccommerce.com)).

2. Site zoning and zoning of surrounding property – Local development organizations can determine if a site is conducive for industrial development or another type of development by the zoning of the site. Listing the nearby land use will also help determine if the site is conducive for industrial development.

To meet the site zoning requirement for certification, please respond to the section on site zoning on the Step I questionnaire as appropriate.

3. Right-of-way information – Please include on the Step I questionnaire as appropriate:

- right-of-way,
- encumbrances,
- liens,
- judgment; and
- restrictive covenants of the site.

4. Fire rating of site – Knowing the fire rating of a site is a necessity to a local economic developer. Businesses want to know what fire service will be available to the site, the proximity of the nearest fire department, and the classification of the nearest fire department for insurance purposes.

To meet the fire rating requirement for certification, please

respond to the fire rating question as to the type of fire rating the site has.

5. Mapping – Please indicate on the questionnaire whether the following is readily available:

- highway map;
- county tax map; and
- flood plain map.

## Instructions for Completing Step II

1. Water infrastructure – To meet certification, local development organizations must give DOC data on the Step II questionnaire on capacity for water and the provider of service.

Required data needed are listed below:

- provider of service;
- size of existing or proposed line;
- distance to the site;
- static and residual pressures in the vicinity of the site;
- location and capacity of closest elevated and/or ground storage tank;
- booster pump station;
- source of water (well or surface water);
- South Carolina Water System Number for water system;
- permitted capacity;
- allocated capacity; and
- excess capacity.

For wet processing such as foods, chemicals, or pharmaceutical preparation, excess capacity should be one million gallons/day or more. For other types of manufacturing, distribution, or mixed use, excess capacity can be less.

2. Wastewater infrastructure – To meet certification, local development organizations must give DOC data on the Step II questionnaire on capacity for wastewater and the provider of service.

Required data needed are listed below:

- provider of service;
- size of existing or proposed line;
- distance to the site;
- if pumped system, provide size of force main;
- capacity of lift station;
- NPDES Permit Number of treatment facility accepting wastewater and DHEC wastewater load allocation;
- permitted capacity;
- allocated capacity;
- excess capacity; and
- pre-treatment requirements.



For wet processing such as foods, chemicals, or pharmaceutical preparation, excess capacity should be one million gallons/day or more. For other types of manufacturing, distribution, or mixed use, excess capacity can be less.

3. Transportation infrastructure - Local development organizations should indicate on the Step II questionnaire the type of transportation infrastructure existing to the site.

Please include the following:

- location of closest county road and state highway/US highway;
- number of lanes and width of roadway;
- statement detailing the roadways capacity of sustaining loads of 80,000 lbs, 20,000 lbs per axle (HS-20 Loading);
- weight limit of bridge if applicable; and
- cost and schedule for extending/improving roadway access to the site.

Acceptable transportation infrastructure would be that the site is within five miles of an interstate interchange or four-lane road.

Dirt roads are not acceptable transportation infrastructure.

4. Rail access – Please indicate the following on the Step II questionnaire:

- rail availability to the site;
- the provider of service; and
- rail rating (e.g. 263,000, 286,000, or 315,000 gross lbs).

5. Telecommunications infrastructure – Local development organizations should indicate the following on the Step II questionnaire:

- telecommunications provider;
- broadband availability;
- existence of digital switching; and
- existence of fiber optics.

6. Electricity infrastructure – Local development organizations should indicate the following on the Step II questionnaire:

- service provider;
- availability of 3-phase service; and
- location of transmission service, and/or distribution service.

Local developers should also indicate if dual/independent feed is available at the site. This service is an added feature.

7. Natural gas infrastructure – Local development organizations should indicate the following on the Step II questionnaire:

- transmission service provider;
- location of transmission service;
- size of the line and PSI (pounds per square inch);
- distribution service provider;
- location of distribution service; and
- size of the line and PSI (pounds per square inch).

If the transmission and/or distribution service is not within one mile, local development organizations should have a commitment from their local natural gas provider to provide either service for a user requiring gas for their process.

8. Additional mapping – Please indicate on the Step II questionnaire whether SCS Soils and NWI Wetlands maps are readily available.
9. Additional infrastructure information - If any components of the infrastructure are not currently in place, in order to progress to the next level, local development organizations must have a plan to extend the service to the site. The plan should include estimates for distance, cost, size of line, and estimated time to extend service to the site.

Local development organizations are not required to contract with an engineering company to complete these plans, but are encouraged to interact with appropriate utility providers to develop future plans.

## Instructions for Completing Step III

1. Maximum contiguous usable acres – To determine the maximum contiguous usable acres, local development organizations should walk the site thoroughly and identify all areas not separated by roads, creeks, rivers, ponds, and other areas where water drainage may be an issue.

Once these areas are identified, local development organizations can determine the maximum contiguous usable acres that can be assembled easily and cost effectively. The local development organizations would then report the number of acres on the Step III questionnaire.

2. Preliminary wetland assessment – This should be performed to identify potential jurisdictional wetlands and “other waters of the United States” which may be present on the project site. This assessment should consist of a review of readily attainable information concerning wetlands and “other waters of the United States” located on the project site. A cursory site reconnaissance should be performed to visually observe the project site for obvious evidence of wetlands and “other waters of the United States.” Field observations and data obtained from the review process should be mapped for a graphic depiction of the wetland areas observed on the project site. The purpose of the assessment is to generate a map of the project site depicting the approximate locations of wetlands and “other waters of the United States,” without delineating the upland/wetland boundary as described in the 1987 United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Wetlands Delineation Manual.

NOTE: If the consulting engineer determines that the proposed site exhibits no obvious evidence of wetlands, the consulting engineer will provide the local developer with a written statement to that effect.

However, if the consulting engineer determines that the site or portion(s) of the site to be developed indicate evidence of wetlands, then a decision should be made whether there is a need to delineate location(s) of wetlands in accordance with the 1987 United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Wetlands Delineation Manual for the purpose of obtaining an ACOE Jurisdictional Determination.

Once this study has been performed, please indicate so on the Step III questionnaire and the date of the study.

3. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) – To complete this study, local development organizations must work with an environmental or engineering firm that performs these services. The Phase I ESA should be performed in accordance with ASTM Standard E1527-00. If there is indication of a recognized environmental concern, a Phase II ESA will be required.
4. Endangered species/archeological investigation - Local development organizations should also request the environmental or engineering firm performing the ESA to identify possible endangered species and/or cultural/archeological artifacts on the site.

If the archeological investigation suggests the presence of any archeological findings and/or historical structures, a Phase I Archeological Investigation may be required.

Once the local developers have this study completed, they would need to indicate this information on the Step III questionnaire.

5. Additional information - Several reliable environmental or engineering groups are located throughout the state. The South Carolina Economic Developers Association's (SCEDA) website provides names of firms to perform the studies. The link is [www.sceda.org/services.htm](http://www.sceda.org/services.htm).

## Instructions for Completing Step IV

1. Preliminary geotechnical study – A study should be performed that indicates the following:
  - soil characteristics of the site are compatible with industrial development including conducting soil borings;
  - obtaining seismic activity based on a soil boring of 100 feet;
  - establishing depth to groundwater at time of boring;
  - suitability of on-site soils for building pad and roadway subgrade;
  - discussion of soil augmentation if required and cost estimates for same; and
  - discussion of liquefaction potential of soils.

To obtain this type of information, local development organizations may wish to contact the same environmental or engineering firms they used to complete the Phase I Environmental Study. Once this study is complete, please respond to the Step IV questionnaire including the date of the study.

2. Color aerial photo of the site – The type of photo should be a low altitude aerial oblique, showing the site and surrounding acreage.

Again, SCEDA's website provides names of firms to perform this service. Their link is [www.sceda.org/services.htm](http://www.sceda.org/services.htm). Some utilities have performed this service for counties in their service area.

Please indicate the status as to whether a photo like this has been taken of the site and please include a copy of the photo.

3. Wetlands delineation – If a wetlands delineation has been performed on the site, please indicate the date the delineation was completed on the Step IV questionnaire.
4. Deed and boundary survey – Local development organizations should indicate on the Step IV questionnaire if a copy of the deed to the property is readily available and if a boundary survey has been performed on the site. In order to be certified, these two items must be available.

Boundary surveys show the official surveyed boundary lines of property certified by a licensed surveyor.

5. A purchase option to the benefit of the local economic development organization. The expiration of the option must be given and the certification will expire with the option if not extended or renewed.
6. International Building Code seismic classification of the specific site must be given.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

**What costs are involved with certification of industrial sites?** The cost involved with providing information to DOC is minimal until local development organizations reach Step III of the certification process. At that point, local development organizations can expect to incur costs on having the Phase I Environmental Studies completed by an accredited environmental or engineering firm.

Completing Step IV will also require local developers to incur costs having a geotechnical study, a color aerial photo performed on the site, and the boundary survey completed.

**Why does DOC have a Site Certification program?** DOC wants to ensure that sites are appropriately marketed to industrial prospects. By having certification, state and local development organizations can quickly identify sites that meet the criteria of the prospect without added research time and minimize uncertainty.

The process of certification will also help local development organizations get a better handle on available products and help prioritize scarce resources.

**What is the benefit to a local development organization to complete the certification process?** Prospects are likely to prefer certified sites. Therefore a certified site will likely be presented by DOC to prospects before a non-certified site.

**Will local development organizations bear the sole financial burden of completing the certification process?** Probably not. There may be funds available through the License Credit Fee Program. This program allows electricity providers, telecommunications companies, and transportation providers to claim credit against license fees in order to give grants to local development organizations to improve infrastructure.